

# What in the World is the World Wide Web?

*National Park  
Service Director  
Roger Kennedy and  
Secretary of  
Education Richard  
Riley viewing the  
World WideWeb  
with students from  
Ashburton  
Elementary School.*

**T**he World Wide Web (also known as the Web or WWW) has become one of the most exciting new tools for cultural resource managers in the latter half of the 20th century. Combining aspects of publishing, broadcasting, networking, teaching, interactive participation, resource sharing, and even fund-raising, the Web offers cultural resource managers exciting new opportunities and challenges.

Among the opportunities is the chance to bring your collections, sites, structures, exhibitions, publications, and expertise into the homes and offices of some 10+ million Web users.

Museums, archives, libraries, schools, tribes, professional organizations, and businesses are all developing Websites to share their cultural resources with the burgeoning audience of Web users.

Among the challenges is the need to keep the information lively, changing, audio-visually rich, story-oriented, and compelling for a relatively young, educated, and feisty international audience. The competition for the attention of this audience is fierce-leading to a surprisingly high level of sophistication in many cultural Websites and in many Web users. The payoffs include a rich array of public relations, educational, and outreach

advantages; as well as the challenge of being able to adequately handle the increasing volume of queries and visitors resulting from the increasing visibility of your cultural resources.

This issue of *CRM* serves as an entry-level manual for cultural resource managers wanting to learn how to use the World Wide Web as both an informational source and as an outreach tool. It contains articles on:

- How to search the WWW for effective use;
- Where to find assistance and resources in all aspects of Web use and development work;
- Guidance on future directions in governmental information policy;
- Case studies on Web development from the Smithsonian Institution, the Committee on the Preservation of the Anthropological Record, and the National Park Service; and
- Guidance on the legal aspects of Web work.

## NPS Internet/World Wide Web

**E**ver since the invention of movable type, people refractory to change have grumbled that older methods weren't sufficient to get a message across. Smoke signals, drums, and courier pigeons had after all, extended the reach of the human voice. Writing had certainly extended both the reach and the shelf-life of messages.

But movable type did have its sway, after which came movable images, sometimes with subtitles, sometimes not. Now, in what some people describe as the post-Gutenberg age, we are at work on the process of moving from printed language to printed language and images.

Internet is a stage in an unfolding process of amplifying the volume of the data exchanged and the speed of transmission. There is no practical alternative to the Park Service's participation in this latest evolution of communications. Everybody is going to be using Internet or World Wide Web or something close to them.

We must be among those having this capability, just as we needed to be among those capable of verbal language (with children, we call it talking) and capable of making use of the miracle of writing. The only question really becomes, How should we add some wisdom to the store of information? How do we seek some quality amid the burgeoning of quantity?

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